

I. Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 25 with the following paragraph:

In one embodiment of the invention, an internal rib of the sleeve is ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset from an external rib of the sleeve, thereby allowing flexure of the wall of the sleeve between the ~~outer and inner jackets~~ internal rib and the external rib.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 24 with the following paragraph:

As shown in FIGS. 2A, 2B, 3 and 4, sleeve 130 is provided with internal ribs 132 dimensioned for contact with the outer surface of inner jacket 120, and external ribs 134 dimensioned for contact with the inner surface of outer jacket 110. The internal ribs 132 are preferably ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset from the external ribs 134 as shown in FIG. 2, although other positions and configurations of ribs are within the scope of the invention, as further described herein, such as the internal and external ribs being ~~radially~~ circumferentially aligned, or partially ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset with some overlap of the respective contact surfaces, or ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset completely with no overlap of the respective contact surfaces. The sleeve 130 preferably remains fixed inside of the outer jacket 110, and in sliding or slidable contact with an inner surface of the outer jacket 110. Alternatively, the sleeve 130 may be fixed relative to the inner jacket 120 and in sliding or slidable contact with outer jacket 110.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 1 with the following paragraph:

As further shown in FIGS. [[2-4]] 2A-4, internal ribs 132 define the sliding contact surface areas with the outer surface of inner jacket 120. Placement of the internal ribs 132 in a ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset arrangement relative to external ribs 134, as shown in FIGS. 2A

and 4, enables the wall 131 of sleeve 133 to flex, to thereby accommodate any undulations or variations in the outer surface of inner jacket 120 as it slides along the length thereof in the telescoping operation. Similarly, if the sleeve 130 is fixed relative to the inner jacket 120, the ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset internal and external ribs 132, 134 allow the wall 131 of the sleeve to flex in order to accommodate variations in the internal surface or internal diameter dimension of the outer jacket 110.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 9 with the following paragraph:

Alternatively, as shown in FIG. 2B, sleeve 130 may be friction fit within outer jacket 110 by contact of biasing ribs 137, which are located ~~radially~~ opposite selected internal ribs 132, or ~~radially~~ opposite each of the internal ribs 132, with external ribs 134 positioned ~~radially~~ circumferentially between as shown in FIG. 2B. Biasing ribs 137 eliminate the need for a bonding material 136 in areas 135, by compressing the external ribs 134 against the interior of outer jacket 110 to securely position the sleeve 130 between the jackets. With areas 135 left open, the wall 131 of the sleeve 130 is free to flex in a radial ~~directions~~ direction as described. The friction fit of the enlarged biasing ribs 137 within outer jacket 110 causes some radial distortion of the sleeve and the contact surfaces of internal ribs 132. This can be corrected by machining the inner diameter of the sleeve 130 or of the contact surfaces of internal ribs 132 after the sleeve is installed in outer jacket 110 to the correct tolerance to receive inner jacket 120. Any variations in the outer surface of inner jacket 120 are then accommodated for by the flexure of the wall 131 of sleeve 133. Alternatively, the internal and external ribs 132, 134 of the sleeve 130 may be partially ~~radially~~ circumferentially offset so that the contact surface areas of the ribs partially ~~radially~~ overlap, as shown for example at the bottom of FIG. 2B.